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Garth Ennis Darick Robertson

The BOYS™

NINETEEN

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The BOYS™

NINETEEN

In a world where costumed heroes soar through the sky and masked vigilantes prowl the night, someone's got to make sure the "supes" don't get out of line. And someone will.

Billy Butcher, Wee Hughie, Mother's Milk, The Frenchman and The Female are The Boys: a CIA-backed team of very dangerous people, each one dedicated to the struggle against the most dangerous force on Earth- superpower. Some superheroes have to be watched. Some have to be controlled. And some of them- sometimes- need to be taken out of the picture.

That's when you call in **The Boys**.

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I TELL YOU NO LIE, G.I.

part one

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"BY THE SUMMER OF NINETEEN FORTY-FIVE, OUR BOYS HAD TOJO ON THE RUN IN THE PACIFIC AN' WERE CLOSIN' IN ON THE JAP ***HOME ISLANDS.*** THE ENDA THE WAR WAS IN SIGHT AT LAST.

"THEN, OUTTA THE BLUE, A COUPLA OUR ***CARRIER AIR GROUPS*** WERE RE-EQUIPPED WITH A ***BRAND NEW FIGHTER:*** THE V.A.C. F7U ***GRIZZLY...***

"AN' ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE JAPS WEREN'T RUNNIN' QUITE AS FAST AS THEY WERE BEFORE...

"THE GRIZZLY WAS FAST AN' IT HAD RANGE, BUT IT GOT RUSHED INTO SERVICE BEFORE THE ***KINKS'D*** BEEN IRONED OUT. THE ***ENGINE*** CUT IF THE PILOT PULLED TOO MUCH G. THE ***GUNS*** WERE THE NEW SIXTY CALIBER THINGS, WHICH ***JAMMED*** AFTER EVEN A ***SHORT BURST.***

"IN OTHER WORDS, THE GODDAMN THING COULDN'T FIGHT...

"AN' THAT WAS JUST THE *TIP* OF THE ICEBERG."

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"TO GET THE RANGE, THEY'D STUCK *FUEL TANKS* EVERY PLACE THEY COULD. INCLUDIN' ONE RIGHT UNDER THE *SEAT.*

"WHICH WOULDA BEEN *FINE,* SO LONG AS THEY REMEMBERED TO MAKE IT *SELF-SEALIN'*...

"AN' THEY DID. THEY PUT IT RIGHT AT THE TOPPA THE LIST OF THINGS TO DO.

"FOR THE MARK TWO.

"THE NAVY WAS PISSED AN' THEN SOME, 'CAUSE ALL OF A SUDDEN THE FLEET HAD NO DAMN *AIR COVER.* THE KAMIKAZES WERE GETTIN' THROUGH, SINKIN' THE CARRIERS AN' THE TROOPSHIPS, SCREWIN' UP THE ISLAND INVASIONS.

"THE PILOTS WERE *CRYIN' OUT* TO BE GIVEN THEIR CORSAIRS AN' HELLCATS BACK, SO THEY COULD GET ON WITH WINNIN' THE WAR..."

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"THEN TRUMAN DROPPED THE BOMBS ON JAPAN, AN' THE POINT WAS MOOT.

"TODAY, THE F7U'S BARELY A FOOTNOTE IN THE HISTORY BOOKS.

"YOU GET A COUPLA THE OL' *PILOT GUYS* TALKIN' ABOUT IT ON THE HISTORY CHANNEL, STILL CURSIN' V.A.C., STILL ASKIN' WHY THEY HAD TO FLY THE *TURD* THAT KILLED SO MANY OF THEIR *BUDDIES.* BUT THAT'S ABOUT ALL.

"THE *C* STOOD FOR *CONSOLIDATED*--THEY'RE LONG GONE. YOU WANNA TAKE A GUESS AN' TELL ME WHAT THE *V.A.* STANDS FOR...?

VOUGHT AMERICAN...

GOT IT IN ONE.

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GGGRRRRRR...

GGGRRRRRRR...!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, TERROR.

GGRRRAAAARRROOOWWRRR...!

I KNOW, MATE.

I KNOW.

SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

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BUT...WHY WOULD THE NAVY TAKE SUCH A TERRIBLE 'PLANE OFF THEM? AN' WHY DID THEY MAKE IT SO FUCKIN' SHITE TO BEGIN WITH?

A-P

MISC

PURE GODDAMN *DESPERATION...*

THEY KNOW THE WAR'S ONLY GOT SO LONG TO GO, THEY WANNA GET THEIR PRODUCT ***OUT THERE.*** NAVY GAVE 'EM THE CONTRACT--THEY DON'T ***DELIVER,*** THEY'RE ***NEVER*** GONNA GET ANOTHER...

SO THEY CUT A FEW CORNERS. SKIP A COUPLE TEST FLIGHTS, MAYBE EVEN FAKE THE RESULTS. DO WHAT IT TAKES TO ***MAKE THE DEADLINE...***

WHAT THE FUCK, IT AIN'T LIKE ***THEY*** GOTTA FLY THE SON OF A BITCH.

AN' THE NAVY PILOTS WHO ***DO,*** WELL, THEY WRITE REPORTS SAYIN' NO FUCKIN' WAY--AN' THE GODDAMN DELIVERIES GO AHEAD ***ANYHOW.***

WHY...?

I HEAR YOU'RE A ***CONSPIRACY NUT.*** WELL, ***THIS*** IS THE CONSPIRACY, KID.

IT AIN'T ANCIENT GODS AN' ALIENS AN' CODED SHIT ON THE DOLLAR BILL. IT AIN'T EVEN A SECRET, IT'S SOMETHIN' ORDINARY FOLKS DO FOR A LIVIN', EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK.

IT'S ***BUSINESS.***

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"WHY'D THE NAVY TAKE THE GRIZZLY? BECAUSE THEY WERE ORDERED TO. WHERE'D THE ORDER COME FROM?

"THE PURCHASIN' COMMISSION.

"AN' THE WAR DEPARTMENT.

"AN' CONGRESS.

"AN' EVERYWHERE ELSE VOUGHT AMERICAN HAS FRIENDS."

ALL THE SENATORS AN' REPS WHOSE CAMPAIGNS THEY BACKED. ALL THEIR OWN PEOPLE THEY GOT APPOINTED TO COMMITTEES.

THERE'S NOTHIN' ***NEW*** ABOUT IT, NOTHIN' ***UNIQUE*** ABOUT IT--GRUMMAN AN' GENERAL MOTORS AN' COLT DO IT TO THIS DAY--AN' MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, I'LL SAY IT AGAIN: ***THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' SECRET ABOUT IT.***

GO OUTSIDE ON THE STREET AN' SHOUT ***WAR ECONOMY.*** SHOUT ***MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX.***

THEN FIND ME SOMEONE WON'T SAY ***YEAH, SO?***

THEN... WHAT...

TURNS OUT, VOUGHT AIN'T EVEN THAT ***GOOD*** AT IT. THEY GOT THE BUSINESS SIDE DOWN OKAY, GOT THEIR HANDS UP ALL THE RIGHT ASSES, BUT SOMEHOW THEY NEVER GET THE ***PRODUCT*** RIGHT...

AN' THEN-- ***FFFF***--THEY FIND SOMETHIN' THEY ***ARE*** GOOD AT.

AN' THIS ***IS*** A SECRET.

MATTER OF FACT, IT'S THE ONE YOU CAME HERE TO ***FIND OUT...***

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INSECT...

YOU BETCHA, MY LADY!

THIS IS BULLSHIT.

SHE SITS THERE LIKE SHE'S *ROYALTY,* SWILLING THOSE FUCKING MARTINIS LIKE THEY'RE GOING OUT OF FASHION--

SHE IS ROYALTY.

GIVE ME A BREAK. AND THE REST OF THEM ARE OFF CONFRONTING THESE ULTIMATE FUCKING BADASSES, AND WOULD SOMEONE *PLEASE* TELL ME WHAT IT *IS* ABOUT THEM? SERIOUSLY?

BUT, BECAUSE I'M SOMEHOW STILL CONSIDERED A GODDAMN NEWBIE, I'M STUCK HERE WITH *YOU.* DOING *THIS.*

WE ALL HAVE OUR CROSSES TO BEAR, A-TRAIN.

WHATEVER...

THE HOMELANDER SAYS THIS IS IMPORTANT. HE SAYS WE SHOULD TAKE A GOOD LONG LOOK, BECAUSE IT'S WHAT HAPPENS TO ANYONE WHO UNDERESTIMATES THESE... WHOEVER THEY ARE.

SEE-- AITCH--ARE-- AYE--ESS--AYE-- ESS, HASH...

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BESIDES, EVERYONE'S SUPPOSED TO TAKE A TURN, AREN'T THEY?

JESUS, WHAT'S THAT SMELL--?

MUCKING

OUT

THE

WARE MA PAARRRR...

LAMP

LIGHTER...

WARE MA PARRRRR...!

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WHY HERE?

RUBBING SALT IN THE WOUND, I SUPPOSE.

DOWN TO BUSINESS: WE THOUGHT THE AGREEMENT STILL STOOD. WE WERE UNAWARE OF HAVING DONE ANYTHING THAT WOULD NEGATE IT.

GIVEN WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME, I PERSONALLY CAN'T IMAGINE WHY YOU'D WANT TO REOPEN HOSTILITIES.

UNLESS COLONEL MALLORY HAS FINISHED MOURNING THOSE TWO LITTLE GIRLS AND RETURNED TO THE FOLD, WHICH I DOUBT. AND I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT THE LAMPLIGHTER IS STILL TRYING TO RECHARGE HIS LAMP WITH HIS FECES.

YET HERE WE ARE.

TEENAGE KIX WERE ONE THING--OH, THEY GOT YOUR NOTE, BY THE WAY. BARREL OF BURNED BONES. CHARMING.

BUT FUCKING UP VIC'S SPEECH WAS SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY. NEVER MIND THAT YOU'VE BEEN BUGGING OUR HOME, NO DOUBT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING: YOU TOOK A SHOT AT VOUGHT. YOU USED US TO DO IT.

AND AS I SAY, I HAVE NO IDEA WHY YOU'D WANT TO.

UNLESS OUR VERY EXISTENCE IS ENOUGH TO DRIVE YOU TO DISTRACTION.

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THERE'S A PHRASE THAT SUMS UP OUR SITUATION PERFECTLY. IT'S *"MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION"*. AND--

LOOK, ARE YOU ACTUALLY PLANNING ON SAYING *ANYTHING* TODAY...?

HA!!

...PARDON, M'SIEU.

PARDON.

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"VOUGHT KEPT BACKIN' THE WRONG HORSE. THEY HAD THE POLITICAL CLOUT THEY NEEDED--BUT THE SHIT THEY WERE FOISTIN' ON THE AIR FORCE AN' THE ARMY, JESUS *CHRIST*...

"NOW, THIS WAS FINE SO LONG AS THERE WASN'T A WAR ON: YOU FILL THE CONTRACT, YOU GET ANY NEGATIVE REPORTS FROM THE MILITARY *BURIED.* NO ONE'S USIN' YOUR LOUSY EQUIPMENT FOR *REAL,* SO WHO THE HELL'S GONNA KNOW, RIGHT?

"GOODBYE MY DARLIN', HELLO..."

VIETNAM.

UH-HUH.

AN' HELLO THE *M-20 ASSAULT RIFLE,* THE LATEST FROM V.A.C.'S *FIREARMS DIVISION.* THE STRAW THAT ALMOST FUCKS 'EM, TOO.

YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT, BY NOW YOU GOTTA BE SEEIN' A *PATTERN.*

AT FIRST THERE'S JUST A FEW MURMURS, BUT VOUGHT KEEP A LID ON 'EM. THEN, IN LATE SIXTY-FIVE, YOU GET THE BATTLE OF THE *IA DRANG VALLEY*--AN' OUR GUYS ARE IN A STAND-UP FIGHT WITH THE GOOKS FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME...

"THEY'RE SURROUNDED AN' OUTNUMBERED, BUT THEY AIN'T SWEATIN' IT. THEY GOT A *THOUSAND MEN,* THEY GOT AIR SUPPORT, ARTILLERY... HELL, THEY'DA BEEN ABLE TO *SHOOT BACK,* THEY'DA WON FOR *SURE.*

"WEEK AFTER THEY GO IN, U.S. RELIEF UNITS REACH THE IA DRANG. FIRST THING THE BOYS ON THE HUEYS SEE IS A THOUSAND SEVERED HEADS."

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"AN' SMACK IN THE MIDDLE OF *THAT*, THEY SEE..."

'LEAST IT TURNED OUT TO BE GOOD FOR SOMETHIN'.

YOU'RE FUCKIN' RIGHT I'M SEEIN' A PATTERN, I MEAN HOW MANY GUYS'VE THESE CUNTS GOT KILLED OVER THE YEARS...?

THEY DON'T CARE. BUSINESS IS BUSINESS.

THIS TIME IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE ***REALLY*** GONE TOO FAR. ONCE THE STORY BREAKS THERE'S AN ***OUTCRY,*** AN' IT'S VOUGHT'S BAD LUCK THAT ***BOBBY KENNEDY HIMSELF*** COMES AFTER 'EM.

HE'S LOOKIN' FOR A PLATFORM, A ***CRUSADE***-- L.B.J.'S CONVINCED HE'S COMIN' AFTER ***'NAM ITSELF,*** SO HE'S ***ECSTATIC*** WHEN BOBBY PICKS ON VOUGHT. ***DOCUMENTS*** GET LEAKED. A ***SUB-COMMITTEE'S*** APPOINTED.

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"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE CITY EDITION

SEN. KENNEDY CONDEMNS "SECOND LITTLE BIGHORN"

VOUGHT AMERICAN CONSOLIDATED STOCKS PLUMMET

"VOUGHT PUBLICLY TAKE IT IN THE ASS ALL SUMMER. WHEN THE LAST TRANSMISSIONS FROM THE IA DRANG ARE BROADCAST, *NO ONE* IN WASHINGTON CAN SAVE 'EM.

"IT IS GAME, SET, AN' *FUCK YOU...*"

AN' WE ALL LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

BOBBY'S ON THE TICKET FOR SIXTY-EIGHT...CONGRESS EXTENDS THE DRAFT FOR JOHNSON--*REVENGE FOR OUR BOYS*...AN' THE ARMY GETS THE M-16, WHICH IS STILL A PIECE OF SHIT, BUT AT LEAST WHEN YOU PULL THE TRIGGER BULLETS *MIGHT* COME OUT THE END...

V.A.C. DO BEST OF ALL. THEY GO BUST. JUST *VANISH.*

THREE YEARS LATER THERE'S A *METEORITE STRIKE* IN *WYOMING,* AN' THEY COME BACK AS *VOUGHT-AMERICAN.*

METE--

THE HOMELANDER?

THE *HOMELANDER.*

THE BOYS AT VOUGHT HAD FINALLY FOUND THEIR NICHE...

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COULDN'T YOU DO THIS AT SUPER-SPEED, OR WHATEVER YOU CALL IT?

ALL I'D DO IS SPRAY SHIT ALL OVER THE PLACE. MY CONTROL'S NEVER BEEN ALL THAT GREAT.

NO, I HEARD ABOUT THAT POOR GIRL IN SCOTLAND...

GIRL IN WHERE?

THIS IS SICK. HE SHOULDN'T BE ALIVE.

HE'S NOT.

HE'S ONE OF THESE V-BOOSTED, BRAIN-DAMAGED REVIVED ASSHOLES--LIKE NUBIA, OR THE BLARNEY COCK BEFORE WHATEVER IT WAS HAPPENED TO HIM.

WELL THEN HE JUST SHOULDN'T--

BE...

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IF THIS IS JUST A PLOY TO MAKE ME ANGRY...ASSUMING YOU'VE SOMEHOW FORGOTTEN JUST HOW CATASTROPHIC THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE...I HAVE TO TELL YOU IT ISN'T WORKING.

SO IF YOU REALLY DO INTEND TO KEEP IT UP, I'VE BETTER THINGS TO DO WITH MY TIME. WE'LL JUST LET THE CHIPS FALL WHERE THEY MAY, SHALL WE?

WHY DO YOU HATE ME SO MUCH?

I DON'T MEAN THIS PROBLEM WITH SUPER-PEOPLE IN GENERAL, OR WHY YOUR TEAM HAS THE AGENDA THAT IT DOES.

I MEAN *WHY* DO *YOU* HATE *ME?*

I CAN HEAR YOUR HEARTRATE, YOU KNOW. YOU CAN KEEP YOUR FACE PERFECTLY STILL, BUT CAN'T STOP YOUR HEART POUNDING ALONG LIKE THAT--AND I KNOW IT'S NOT FROM FEAR, I'D BE ABLE TO SMELL IT. IT'S ANGER.

EXACTLY THE SAME AS THE LAST TIME WE MET.

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"I ASKED THE OTHERS AFTERWARDS, AND NONE OF THEM PICKED UP ON IT. ALL THEY GOT WAS A CONSTANT SENSE OF DISDAIN, LIKE YOU BARELY THOUGHT THEY WERE WORTH LOOKING AT.

"ACTUALLY, YOU DIDN'T LOOK AT THEM. YOU COULDN'T TAKE YOUR EYES OFF ME."

TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE WE'D NEVER MET BEFORE THAT POINT. BUT IT'S QUITE CLEARLY DEEPLY PERSONAL.

SO WHAT DID I DO TO YOU? OR, I DON'T KNOW, TO SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU?

...AH.

NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE.

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"THIS IS ONE SECRET ORIGIN *EVERYBODY* KNOWS."

LITTLE BABY AT THE BOTTOM OF A CRATER, NOT EVEN A *SPACESHIP* TO HIS NAME. COME ALL THE WAY FROM THE STARS *ALONE.*

INSIDE A WEEK HE'S A GROWN BOY. A WEEK AFTER THAT HE'S A TEENAGER.

HE FELL OUTTA THE SKY, FOR CHRISSAKES, HE'S A *MIRACLE...*

BUT THEY FOUND HIM OUT ON THE PRAIRIE. HE COULDN'T BE MORE *AMERICAN.*

IT'S *PERFECT.*

"IT'S A BUNCHA BULLSHIT, TOO. HE'S BEEN IN A *SILO* IN SOUTH DAKOTA FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS, WITH A *HYDROGEN BOMB* STRAPPED TO HIS ASS 'TIL THEY'RE SURE THEY CAN *TRUST* HIM.

"THE STORY'S FOR THE *PRESS*--WHO LAP IT UP LIKE *CREAM,* OF COURSE..."

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"HELL, DOESN'T EVERYONE?

"THEY SURE AS SHIT LAP *HIM* UP. VOUGHT HAVE TAUGHT HIM WELL, AN' HE'S A WILLIN' PUPIL. HE GETS THAT SMILE *JUST RIGHT*--AN' WHEN HE *SPEAKS*, SHIT, ALL BETS ARE *OFF*...

"HE'S *HUMBLE*, SO HE DON'T INTIMIDATE THE MEN. HE'S *VULNERABLE*, SO THE WOMEN GET TO ADD A LITTLE ROMANCE TO THEIR *FUCK-FANTASIES*.

"THE *RIGHT* LIKE HIM 'CAUSE HE'S POWERFUL-- AN' HE'S *OURS*.

"THE *LEFT* LIKE HIM 'CAUSE HE'S SMART AN' HE'S GOT A SENSE OF HUMOR, SO AT LAST THIS WALKIN' GODDAMN BOMB IS *HUMAN*..."

BUT... WHERE DID HE...

AH, THEY FUCKIN' *GREW HIM.*

FIRST OF A NEW BREED. VOUGHT'S HAD A TEAM MANIPULATIN' COMPOUND V, *REFININ' IT:* THEY INJECT IT IN A FOETUS, IMPLANT THE THING IN SOME RETARDED BROAD...

KILLS HER STONE DEAD AT BIRTH. NOT THAT ANYONE GIVES A SHIT ABOUT *THAT.*

RETARDED?

WAIT A MINUTE, HOW DOES IT KILL HER...?

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DON'T KNOW FOR SURE. WHATEVER IT DOES, IT TAKES OUT THE ENTIRE MEDICAL TEAM HANDLIN' THE BIRTH, TOO-- HENCE THE GODDAMN H-BOMB.

THE WOMAN'S FROM SOME ***DRUG TRIAL*** VOUGHT'S BEEN RUNNIN', TURNS OUT TO HAVE NO LEGAL GUARDIAN. JUST HER ***BAD LUCK,*** I GUESS...

ANYHOW, HE GROWS UP AN' HE CALMS DOWN, AN' HE'S SUCH A BIG SUCCESS THEY DO IT AGAIN. THEY GET ***REAL GOOD AT IT.***

BLACK NOIR IS FIRST. THEN MAEVE. THEN JACK FROM JUPITER, THE DEEP, THE LAMPLIGHTER, THEN ***MISTER MARATHON***-- HE'S THE FUCK A-TRAIN REPLACED, A YEAR OR TWO AGO.

"THEY DO IT ***SEVEN TIMES.***

"THERE'S BEEN SUPES SINCE THE FORTIES, BUT THEY CAN ALL OFFICIALLY GO SCREW. THESE GUYS ARE THE ***NUKES*** TO THEIR ***STICKS OF DYNAMITE.***

"***VOUGHT*** HAVE SOMETHIN' THEY CAN ***WORK WITH*** AT LAST. THEY KNOW HOW TO PLAY THE SYSTEM, THEY GOT IT SEWN UP REAL TIGHT--BUT UP 'TIL NOW THEY'VE HAD A SHITTY ***PRODUCT.***

"NOT NO MORE."

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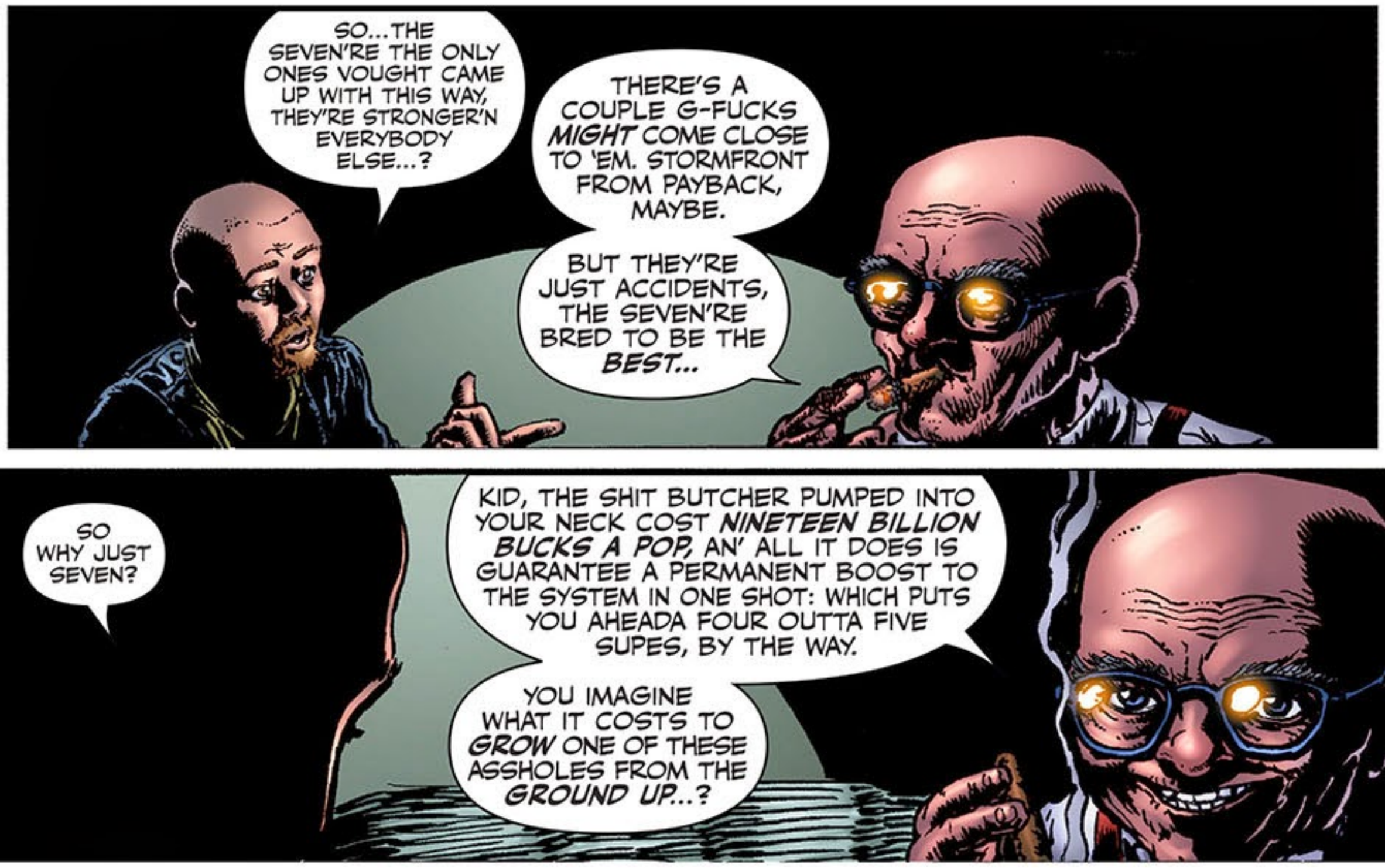
SO...THE SEVEN'RE THE ONLY ONES VOUGHT CAME UP WITH THIS WAY, THEY'RE STRONGER'N EVERYBODY ELSE...?
THERE'S A COUPLE G-FUCKS MIGHT COME CLOSE TO 'EM. STORMFRONT FROM PAYBACK, MAYBE.
BUT THEY'RE JUST ACCIDENTS, THE SEVEN'RE BRED TO BE THE BEST...
SO WHY JUST SEVEN?
KID, THE SHIT BUTCHER PUMPED INTO YOUR NECK COST NINETEEN BILLION BUCKS A POP, AN' ALL IT DOES IS GUARANTEE A PERMANENT BOOST TO THE SYSTEM IN ONE SHOT: WHICH PUTS YOU AHEADA FOUR OUTTA FIVE SUPES, BY THE WAY.
YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT COSTS TO GROW ONE OF THESE ASSHOLES FROM THE GROUND UP...?
JINGS.
THINGS IN THERE YOU DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT, BELIEVE ME.
ALL RIGHT, HERE'S SOMETHIN' ELSE I'VE BEEN WONDERIN' ABOUT: IF THE SUPES'RE REALLY SO POWERFUL, WHY DON'T THEY JUST GET TOGETHER AN' TAKE OVER THE WORLD?
WHY DO THEY TRUST THE HOMELANDER? OR NOT JUST HIM OR THE SEVEN, ANY OF 'EM?
WHAT, ARE YOU KIDDIN' ME...?
WHY DOES ANYONE OBEY THE LAW? SO SOCIETY STAYS THE WAY IT IS. 'CAUSE THAT'S WHAT MAKES THE MOST FOLKS COMFORTABLE.
AN' IT'S THE SAME FOR SUPES...
HOMELANDER

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RULIN' THE WORLD'D BE A *MOTHERFUCKER,* 'SPECIALLY NEXT TO ENJOYIN' THE FRUITS OF BEIN' POWERFUL IN IT *JUST THE WAY IT IS.* THAT'S WHY THERE'S MORE SUPE *HEROES* THAN SUPE *VILLAINS*--BECAUSE THEY KNOW A *GOOD GODDAMN THING* WHEN THEY SEE IT.

BECAUSE THE *STATUS QUO WORKS.*

THE HOMELANDER

WHICH IS EXACTLY WHERE THE *TROUBLE* STARTS.

THE PUBLIC CAN'T GET ENOUGHA THE SEVEN. VOUGHT'RE MAKIN' MONEY HAND OVER FIST--THEY GOT A BRAND AS GOOD AS THE *FLAG,* THEY *OUGHTA BE.*

WHAT THEY *DON'T* GOT NO MORE IS *COMPETITION...*

NUMBER ONE IN A FIELD OF ONE. THEY LEAVE THE *OTHER CORPORATIONS* LYIN' IN THE DUST.

BUT THE OTHER GUYS *AIN'T FOOLED.* THEY KNOW WHAT VOUGHT'RE DOIN' NOW IS GETTING' READY TO *COME AT THEM.*

BUSINESS, REMEMBER...?

EXCEPT THE OTHERS'RE ALL *DEFENSE CONTRACTORS.* THAT'S WHERE THE *REAL MONEY* IS.

THAT'S HOW *THEY KNOW* WHAT COMES NEXT FOR VOUGHT IS *WEAPONIZIN' SUPES.*

AN' THAT, *EVENTUALLY,* BY A LONG AN' TWISTED TRAIL, IS WHY THERE AIN'T NO GODDAMN *BROOKLYN BRIDGE* NO MORE.

LET'S TAKE A BREAK, KID, I THINK I COULD USE A CUP OF COFFEE...

next: SECRETS OF THE LETTERCOLUMN

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